



**First Quarter FY 2014
Performance Monitoring Report
October 1-December 31, 2013**

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Education and Higher Education

Palestinian Faculty Development Program

AMIDEAST partners with the Open Society Institute (OSI)/Soros Foundation, and varying university partners. PhD and MA graduates and short-term fellows were mobilized to share the knowledge and skills gained with their peers and colleagues. The ultimate goal of the program is to improve the quality of higher education, and support the emergence of a new generation of academic leaders.

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PALESTINIAN FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (PFDP)

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Executive Summary

PFDP's activities during the first quarter of FY 2014 focused primarily on reviewing the progress of the two existing CTEs, providing initial support for the establishment of the new Center for Teaching and Learning at Palestine Polytechnic University (PPU), developing plans for the fourth CTE at Palestine Technical University Kadoorie (PTUK), and making preparations for the national roundtable seminars scheduled for FY 2014 to be developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. In addition, work continued to finalize the PMP and Implementation Plan for FY 2014. Additional activities included finalizing plans for consultant visits in Quarters 2 and 3 of FY 2014.

Plans to complete the national roundtable seminars with the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC) were delayed with the unanticipated departure of its Head at the end of November 2013, although some initial progress was made.

The two original CTEs whose new contracts with PFDP were signed in an earlier quarter, are continuing to operate according to their new agreements with PFDP and reporting on their milestones. The third CTE at Palestine Polytechnic University (PPU)_whose contract was signed in mid-August acquire equipment and resources according to its contract, and an MOU for the fourth CTE with PTUK was negotiated during this quarter..

COP Nancy George took up her responsibilities in November, 2014, with program continuity provided until then through Education Program Manager Samar Abboushi and Grants and Compliance Manager Bernaba Ghanim. Plans were made for the recruitment of a part-time administrative intern and a fulltime Communications Officer at the beginning of the next quarter.

1. PFDP Program Goals

PFDP has four specific goals:

1. Promote the expansion, retention, and professional development of promising academics teaching in the social sciences and humanities
2. Revitalize and reform teaching at Palestinian higher education institutions
3. Promote an institutional culture of teaching and learning
4. Identify and develop future higher education leaders from among PFDP alumni and participants.

The Program Goals set out above refer to the entire PFDP implementation cycle from inception in 2005 until its close at the end of March 2015.

In its final 24 months, beginning in March 2013, PFDP is primarily focused on implementing activities and achieving results in relation to Goals 2 and 3. Goals 1 and 4 largely reflect PFDP activities between 2005 and 2012, although some PhD scholars are to return to Palestine in relation to Goal 1, and the showcasing of “success stories” that reflect the impact of the project related to Goal 4 will be undertaken.

2. Progress in Achieving Program Goals

Goal 1: Promote the expansion, retention, and professional development of promising academics teaching in the social sciences and humanities.

Expected results from activities supported in relation to this goal:

- Seven PhD graduates will return to their universities: six by December 2013 and one by June 2014.

PFDP has been providing PhD scholarships for study in the United States over the duration of the project. Seven PhD students supported by PFDP (through the Open Society Foundations) were unable to complete their degree prior to September 28, 2012, the end of the cooperative agreement under which PFDP operated prior to its most recent modification.

Open Societies Foundation agreed to continue supporting these students in the U.S. as they worked to finish their studies, and PFDP set aside funds from its current budget to pay for their return flight to the West Bank.

Four of the remaining PhD fellows completed their studies and returned to WBG by the end of December 2013. One fellow, who had previously returned to WBG when his visa expired, has been trying unsuccessfully to get his visa renewed; consequently, although he has returned to WBG, where he is continuing his dissertation work under the local supervision of Dr. Louis Cristillo who holds an honorary appointment as associate professor in the Department of International and Transcultural Studies at Teachers College, Columbia University, and who is

on the candidate's doctoral committee . One fellow from Gaza who completed her studies and was awarded her PhD is currently in Europe, seeking permission to return to Gaza.. The final fellow is continuing work on his second doctorate and will graduate in June 2014. At that time, he will return to WBG. Therefore, by the end of the current FY, all expected results under this goal will be complete.

Goal 2: Revitalize and reform teaching at Palestinian higher education institutions.

Expected results from activities supported in relation to this goal:

At the systems level:

- A series of national roundtable seminars (totaling eight by 2015) with higher education decision makers will result in the development and recommendation of policies for the consideration of the MoEHE that can lead to the strengthening of the higher education system in Palestine.
- The roles of the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC) and the Higher Education Council (HEC) in the management of the higher education system are clarified and strengthened through policy reforms emerging from the national roundtable seminars and follow up workshops proposed to the MoEHE.

At the institutional level:

- The work of the Centers for Teaching Excellence will complement the revitalization and reform of the higher education institutions through the development of policies to support and sustain the Centers in their respective universities.

At the learner level:

- An improved culture of teaching and learning reflect the work of the Centers and support improved learner performance and achievement.

A workshop following up on the first national roundtable seminar in September 2013 was anticipated early in Q1 to develop specific policies clarifying and strengthening the operation of the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC). However, the impending departure of the Head of AQAC suspended PFDP's work with AQAC in the area of policy development. Until a new Head is appointed, follow-up to the September roundtable seminar on the AQAC-related policy issues could not be pursued. This appointment did not occur during the first quarter of FY 2014.

The second AQAC-related workshop on quality standards in e-learning programs did not take place because the facilitator, Dr. Bruce Chaloux of the Sloan Consortium, died unexpectedly. The completion of this contract and its deliverables were still outstanding at the end of Quarter 1 FY 2014, as he had not submitted his report prior to his death. Dr. Saida Affouneh, the national counterpart of Dr. Chaloux, is expected to write a summary report on the work she did with Dr. Chaloux and submit recommendations emerging from the work done for AQAC in preparation for this seminar.

The two universities that established CTEs under previous PFDP grants and that are continuing to develop their centers during the extension period - Bethlehem University and An Najah National University - are both supported by university policies that have integrated their operation into the fabric of university life and encourage academic staff to engage in workshops and activities conducted through the Centers.

Goal 3: Promote an institutional culture of teaching and learning

Activities intended to ensure results in support of this goal have constituted a major area of PFDP's focus under the project extension. To achieve this goal, four main activities are being implemented now (or are planned, as in the case of National Conferences).

- Continuing support for established Centers for Teaching Excellence (CTEs)
- Supporting partnerships between established CTEs and other Palestinian universities
- Supporting new CTEs
- Organizing National Conferences on Teaching and Learning Excellence

Continuing support for established Centers for Teaching Excellence

Expected results:

- Existing CTEs continue core activities and begin work on new programs of activity.
- CTEs undertake a new range of activities leading to improved teaching and administrative practices and an improved culture of teaching and learning.

A PFDP initiative in 2011-2012 was the awarding of grants to An-Najah National University and Bethlehem University for each to establish a Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) to promote the creation of a university culture of effective learning and teaching. Each Center continues to have strong support from university leaders. They have demonstrated a strong record of innovation and faculty development support. The two Centers have developed an ambitious agenda of activities and created resources to promote excellence in learning and teaching at their respective campuses.

PFDP extended its support by allocating more funds to the two existing CTEs to enhance their capacity to develop initiatives that reflect a continuing commitment to improving the quality of learning and teaching. An Najah is focusing on community-based learning and impact evaluation and Bethlehem on academic research literacy and academic leadership.

Academic work at An Najah has continued since the first phase of PFDP without interruption; evidence of this work is in a document titled "Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education" dated May 22, 2013 that outlines a one-day symposium led by its Center for Learning and Teaching (CELT) and An Najah faculty.

At Bethlehem University, there is also very strong evidence of sustainability, which is reflected in the *Teaching for Learning* periodical published by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (available: <http://www.bethlehem.edu/document.doc?id=909>)

PFDP's new investment in these two CTEs will complement the support provided by their respective host universities and, therefore, enhance the sustainability of each one. Both CTEs continue to offer a range of other academic support services.

Through continuing support, the two existing centers are also serving as a resource for other centers or for other universities eager to move into this important area.

Supporting partnerships between established CTEs and other Palestinian universities

Expected results:

- Partnerships undertake activities leading to improved teaching and administrative practices and improved culture of teaching and learning.

Building on the success and experience of the established CTEs at Bethlehem and An Najah National Universities, PFDP support is providing a 'multiplier effect' by supporting these two universities to extend their reach by partnering with another university.

A partnership between An Najah and Palestine Technical University Kadoorie (PTUK) is in negotiation and will lead to the development of an MOU between PTUK and An Najah through which An Najah's CTE will support PTUK's trainers and faculty as they work to establish its CTE. While an agreement was not finalized during this Quarter, planning for collaborative activities between the two universities was significantly advanced.

Supporting new Centers for Teaching Excellence

Expected results:

- CTEs undertake activities leading to improved teaching and administrative practices and improved culture of teaching and learning.

PFDP worked with Palestine Polytechnic University (PPU) to support its new CTE in meeting its milestones scheduled for the first Quarter. These milestones included:

- Staffing the center: Director, Project Coordinator, and Administrative & Financial Assistant.
- Renovation of space: labs, offices, & training halls.
- Purchasing equipment & furniture.

The PFDP Contracts and Compliance Manager assisted PPU in identifying the equipment and resources needed to make the CTE operational. These orders were placed during Quarter 1 FY 2014.

PFDP worked with the PTUK President and the PTUK proposal development team to refine the MOU to support PTUK's CTE development plans prior to the signing of the MOU. The wording of the MOU has been agreed between USAID and PTUK and the signing of the agreement is awaiting the finalization of the proposal for the CTE. The PTUK proposal writing team has been in regular contact with PFDP to refine and finalize its proposal.

National Conferences on Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Building on the 2012 success of An Najah and Bethlehem in organizing a National Conference on Teaching and Learning, national conferences on teaching and learning organized by the CTEs will continue to be a feature of PFDP and will engage faculty and administrators from all universities in the West Bank.

Expected results:

- National Conference on Community Based Learning implemented by An Najah National University in May, 2014
- National Conference on Learning and Teaching implemented by PPU in FY 2015
- National Conference of Teaching and Learning Innovation hosted by PTUK in FY 2015
- Higher education institutions faculty attend and contribute to the national conferences.

There was no work on conference planning to report during this Quarter.

Goal 4: Identification and development of future higher education leaders from among PFDP alumni and participants.

Expected results:

- Documentation of PFDP alumni success stories and their impact on the higher education sector in Palestine and internationally
- A documentary video of PFDP and its impact on the people and institutions involved since its inception.

PFDP has many achievements to report from its work since 2005. In this final extension period, PFDP plans to undertake the documentation of the project's impact on the development and strengthening of higher education in WBG. Examples of documentation that have already been undertaken include a publication featuring the PhD fellows who returned from the first cohort of study, a booklet featuring the achievements of the National Roundtables, Bethlehem University's video celebrating the work of its CTE that is accessible on the BU website (<http://www.bethlehem.edu/institutes/CETL>), and An Najah National University's video of the impact of the CTE's training on university faculty that is in the final stages of completion in Q1 2014. Foremost among the documentation PFDP plans to undertake is the exploration of the career development of PFDP alumni and graduates following their involvement in PFDP

activity. Such documentation is crucial to measuring the impact of PFDP on the higher education sector. A Communications Officer is expected to be hired in Q2 to support the achievement of this goal.

3. PFDP Staffing, Program Administration and Reporting

Staffing

PFDP's new Chief of Party, Dr. Nancy George, arrived in mid-November. Prior to this time and after the departure of Mr. Robert Cannon who served as Acting COP until early September, continuity in program activity was provided by Education Program Manager Samar Abboushi and Contracts and Compliance Manager Bernaba Ghanim, with support as needed by AMIDEAST's country office and headquarters staff.

The two other vacancies - for an Administration Officer and a Communications Officer - were reconsidered with the arrival of the new COP. Rather than hiring a single person to fulfill both roles as had previously been considered, the two functions were separated for more effective implementation.

It has been agreed that documenting the impact of the PFDP is crucial at this point in its operation: as a nine-year project with a diversity of activities that have impacted higher education over its existence, the PFDP has an obligation to track its influence and achievements and document its impact since 2005. Consequently, the recruitment of an experienced Communications Officer is critical for the PFDP. The recruitment of this staff member will be a priority in the next quarter.

An intern is currently being recruited to provide half-time administrative support, with the position expected to be filled early in Quarter 2. If the administration needs of the project prove to exceed those currently envisioned, PFDP will consider expanding the position to a full-time one.

Program administration: USAID

Program audit: Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) audit of Al Azhar scholarships

During the quarter PWC reported on its audit of the Al Azhar scholarship program. The report will be discussed with Al Azhar, AMIDEAST and PWC early in the next quarter.

Program administration: PFDP documentation and site visits

Documentation:

The FY14 Implementation Plan, PMP and Master Indicator List, not yet approved by USAID, were revised and submitted for review to the AOR in December 2013.

Site visits and stakeholder meetings:

- Visit of COP, G&CM and EPM to An-Najah National University's President (courtesy visit) and CTE to familiarize COP with CTE's operations and achievements

- Visit of COP and EPM to PPU to introduce COP and review the preparations in the development of the CTE
- Participation of COP and EPM in National Roundtable Seminar Steering Committee meetings to plan FY 2014 national roundtable seminars
- Meeting(s) of COP , EPM and PFDP consultant Dr. Suhail Sultan with Minister of Education and Higher Education to obtain approval of the approach and focus of the second national roundtable seminar and the potential topics and dates of the other roundtable seminars in FY 2014
- Participation of COP and EPM in brainstorming session with USAID Director and Deputy Director of the Education Program Office (with AMIDEAST Country Director and COPs of LTD and SIP) to discuss direction of existing education projects
- Participation of COP and EPM in presentation of RDI consultants' upcoming literacy research initiative (with AMIDEAST Country Director and COPs of LTD and SIP).

4. Looking Ahead to Q2 FY2014

The second quarter of FY 2014 will focus on the following:

- Preparing for and participating in the OIG audit of PFDP
- Recruiting the Communications Officer and Administrative Intern
- Finalizing the MOU and proposal for the PTUK CTE
- Supporting the formal signing ceremony for the establishment of the PTUK CTE
- Supporting the formal launching of the PPU CTE
- Extending the contracts of the two international evaluators for the CTEs
- Supporting the visit of the two external evaluators to Palestine (February-March 2014)
- Bringing international partner (Northwestern University) to Palestine to mentor the new CTEs
- Developing a schedule of international visits for key personnel of new CTEs
- Finalizing the schedule and agenda for the national roundtable seminars for higher education policy with the MoEHE and AQAC
- Supporting the mounting of at least two national roundtable seminars in the quarter
- Organizing focus groups with PhD and master's graduates to begin the documentation of PFDP's impact on the higher education sector.